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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PINR](#) [EAID](#) [MCAP](#) [MOPS](#) [SU](#)
SUBJECT: PAULINO MATIP SUPPORTS UN DEPLOYMENT AND U.S. SPLA
TRANSFORMATION HELP

Classified By: Acting P/E Chief Michael Honigstein, Reason: Section 1.4
(b) and (d)

¶1. (C) Summary: Lt. Gen. Paulino Matip urged continued U.S. engagement in Darfur and joint action by the international community and SPLA to address the area's urgent crisis. He notes a growing African-Arab gap in Sudan and believes the North is rearming militias in the South. Matip sees President Bashir's fear of being arrested for Darfur atrocities as the major obstacle to UN deployment. The NCP is purchasing increasing amounts of arms with its oil revenue and positioning forces in the North/South border areas. Matip says most Other Armed Groups (OAG) in Upper Nile have ceased attacks and he is working to bring militia leaders into the SPLA. End Summary.

An Aging and Ailing General

¶2. (C) Lt. Gen. Paulino Matip, Deputy Commander-in-Chief of the SPLA, received CG James and A/DLO Barnhart at his heavily guarded Juba compound 7 October. Matip returned to Juba 6 October from Nairobi where he had received medical treatment, reportedly for diabetes. He appeared tired and weak, but walked slowly on his own and spoke lucidly during the hour-long conversation. Matip, formerly the most powerful militia leader in the South, has been well-compensated for his January 9, 2006 signing of the "Juba Declaration" and the disbanding of his South Sudan Defense Force (SSDF), and his joining the ranks of the SPLA. Matip's compound is the most impressive CG has seen in Juba, housing several relatively modern-looking cement buildings, as well as traditional thatched-roof "tukuls" inside the walls, surrounded by about ten tukul/shanty hut guardhouses outside the walls. One of the shanty huts outside of the compound's south entrance contained approximately 20, 50-pound sacks of either rice or beans to presumably feed his private guards. Dozens of SPLA-uniformed, gun-toting soldiers languish in and out of the compound. There were approximately 23 Kalashnikov rifles visible inside the compound and half as many outside the walls during the visit. Several other large clusters of associates and military personnel were huddled in separate meetings inside the courtyard. Matip said one group included SSDF/Murle militia leader Ismail Konyi with whom he was negotiating to join the SPLA. A 30-caliber machine gun mounted on a tripod loaded with a belt of several hundred rounds is positioned outside the East wall of the compound facing the street at the main entrance.

Darfur Needs US/UN/SPLA Joint Actions

¶3. (C) Matip held court seated at a table under a tree joined by several associates and an interpreter, Col. James ¶L. Thiciot. Matip said he did not talk a lot but only when

he had something to say and that he only told the truth. He thanked the U.S. for its support for South Sudan, praised our efforts to obtain the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA), and urged continued engagement to bring peace to Darfur. He reiterated the SPLA's support for UN deployment into Darfur and stressed the need for the U.S. to work with the UN and the SPLA to address the situation. Matip alluded to a desire for the SPLA to take military action in Darfur, but did not pursue that line of conversation when CG informed him unequivocally that the USG could not and would not provide any lethal assistance to the SPLA. The General shifted to the need to have the U.S. work with the UN and SPLA to press Khartoum to accept a UN deployment.

14. (C) President Bashir is afraid of being arrested by the UN, along with the others on the list of 51, Matip said. This is a very real concern for Bashir, he added. Matip said he knew Bashir well, as they had spent four years together in the South when Matip was fighting against the SPLA.

Arab-African Divide Growing

15. (C) The Arab-African divide is growing in Sudan and the North continues to rearm militias to attack the "Africans," Matip said. The SAF has not withdrawn from Upper Nile and instead has increased its presence there, as well as in Bahr Al Ghazal, massing troops, heavy artillery, and tracked vehicles, according to Matip. "The war against Hezbollah in Lebanon was stopped, why can't the world stop the Darfur (abuses)", Matip asked.

16. (C) The overall security situation in Juba is allegedly worse than in Upper Nile with civilians more heavily-armed,

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Matip said. The SAF is also returning to Juba and has hidden arms caches in the Southern capital and among its Joint Integrated Units.

17. (C) Matip concluded with a plea for more assistance for the SPLA and development aid for the South. He said the North was using its oil revenue to buy arms and that the people of Abeyi and Bentiu were suffering from the displacement and lack of development caused by the North's oil exploitation. CG described generally the USG intent to help the SPLA transform into a modern military and noted that we are involved in substantial development programs throughout the South.

18. (C) Comment: Matip is an aging and weakened former militia leader who has no political vision for the South, but remains an important military ally for the SPLA. The real military power in the SPLA and number three in its hierarchy, Chief of Staff Lt. General Oyai Deng Ajak, reportedly does not have a close relationship with Matip, but is publicly civil towards him. Matip appears to continue to exercise substantial influence over his Nuer ethnic group fighters and others whom he has brought to Juba. Matip said his children live in Uganda, but that their mothers reside in his Juba compound. End Comment.

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